SHERRYANA

By

F. W. C.

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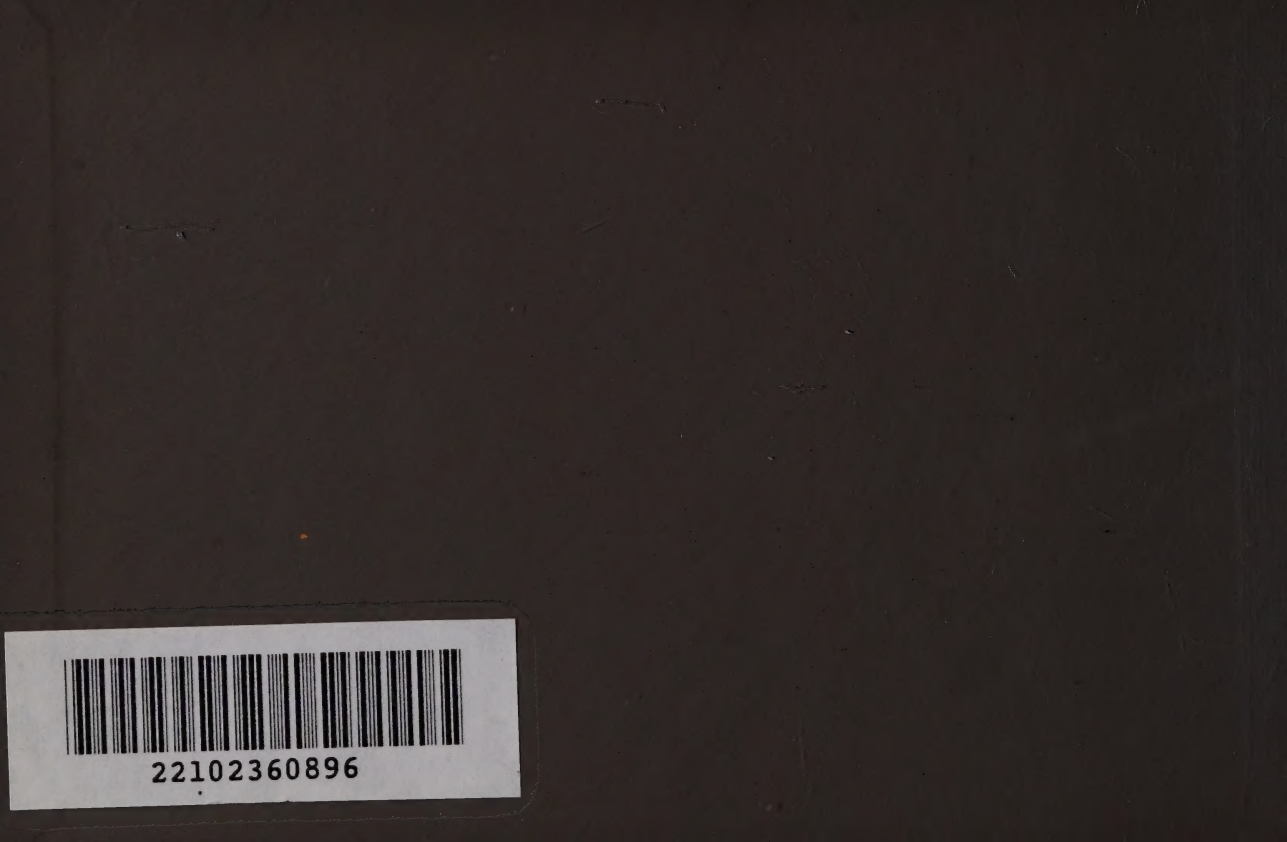
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By F. W. Cosens.

Variomagus

To the Lad High President, B W Richardson F.R.S. F.S.A. with the kind regards of the Purveyor of Pale Sherry. J. W. Caseus 27th March 1888.

SHERRYANA.

THE DUKE AT JEREZ.

SHERRYANA.

BY

F. W. C.

ILLUSTRATED BY

LINLEY SAMBOURNE.

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1887

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Imitated from the Greek of Hedylus.

Drink we choicest sherry wine,
Something old and something fine,
Then something witty, something gay,
We shall surely find to say.
Flasks of Jerez hither bring,
Quaffing slowly while we sing;
Jovial poets sport and play,
Pythagorean souls throw life away.

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CHAPTER I.

SHERISH, THE DAUGHTER OF SEVILLE.

THE claim of Xeres, Xerez, or Jerez de la Frontera to be the cradle of sherry cannot be called in question. The locality is mapped out by nature as the nursery of the vine, which has, without doubt, been cultivated by the successive masters of the soil from time immemorial. Carthaginian, Roman, Vandal, Goth, Saracen and Spaniard have one and all been familiar with the

Andalusian grape as fruit and wine, as historical evidence shows.

Al-hijári says: 'Sherish (Jerez) is the daughter of Seville, and its river the son of the Guadalquivir; it is a very fine city, with a large population and extensive markets. Its inhabitants he describes as people of great imagination and talent, very elegant in their dress and the interior of their houses'—not a bad portrait of the Jerez of to-day.

Al-Hakim, Second (A.D. 960), 'persuaded,' says Gayangos, in his 'Mohamedan Dynasties of Spain,' 'by some strict theologians who were averse to wine, commanded that all the vines in his dominions should be rooted up; but at the suggestion of some of his favourites, who represented to him that he could not prevent wine being made in other parts and introduced into Andalusia, he relaxed in severity, and the order was never carried into execution.'

Historians assert that 'Andalus the son of Tubal peopled this corner of Spain, and gave it the name of Andalusia.'

Señor Riaño notes that on the ancient Andalusian coins of Acinipus, Orippus, Oset, and Julius Traductus bunches of grapes are represented, leaving no doubt of the fertility of the vineyards and the important commerce in wine carried on by the Jerezanos of that period.'

Pliny, Martial, and Silius Italicus all allude to the fertility of this favoured province of Spain, and were probably judges of sherry. The Romans, we know, appreciated good wine, and preferred it old; for Horace boasts of drinking Falernian, 'born, as it were, with him,' or which reckoned its age from the Consul of the day:

'O, nata, mecum, Consuli Manlio.'

To Don Alfonso el Sabio seems to be due the determined extension of viticulture in the neighbourhood of Jerez, for in 1268 is noted a grant made to 'Los caballeros del féudo,' the feudal gentlemen, of six acres of vineyard and a gift of land, 'that they might extend the cultivation;' also 'six acres of new ground to plant vines.' All this is literally set forth in a record, the original of which is said to be preserved amongst the archives of the city.

An important Arabic document, published by the Spanish Royal Academy of History, entitled, 'A Diary of the Operations of the Army of Jusuf,' when he besieged the town of Xerez,

in the reign of Sancho the Brave (1288), states: 'On the 30th of May Jusuf removed his encampment to the other side of the river, between the *vineyards* and the gardens,' and again various expeditions of these same troops are noted 'towards San Lucar, but in no case are vineyards named in that direction. The cultivation of the vine would therefore at that time appear to be confined to the 'Cartuja' side of Jerez. The Bodega, supposed to have been used by the Carthusians for storage of their wine, is still standing amid the ruins of the Monastery.

Although it is impossible to fix with any degree of accuracy the date when sherry was first exported to England, Benito de Cárdenas has left us an interesting account of the events of his day (in a manuscript in the possession of His Excellency Don Pascual de Gayangos, at Madrid). He states, under date 1483, 'No English nor Breton ships have arrived this year to trade, in consequence of the war with the Biscayans.' Señor Araquistain, in his Tradiciones Vasco Cántabras (Tolosa, 1866), alludes to a naval battle fought at Winchelsea between Edward the Third's ships and those of the Biscayans:

'Our ships of Biscay oak in hundreds float
By Winchelsea. The Basque and Anglian's boat
In shock of battle met. The Vascon quailed,
We dyed their sea with blood, then homeward sailed.'

In Pedro de Medina's 'Libro de Grandezas y Cosas Memorables de España' (Alcala, 1566), speaking of the fertility of the Jerez vineyards, the author writes: 'The vintage there ordinarily yields about sixty thousand butts of wine; and there are shipped to England, Flanders and other parts, each year, more than forty thousand butts.'

Of the wine requisitioned to be supplied for the equipment of the Spanish Armada, the quota for Jerez is set down at five thousand butts.

These somewhat prolix statements indicate that from the earliest times the sherry grape was extensively cultivated, and wine-making a recognised industry. This we think justifies us in claiming Jerez de la Frontera to be 'the cradle of sherry.'

Richard Ford, in his amusing olla, *Gatherings from Spain*, thus alludes to sherry: 'The wines of Spain deserve a chapter to themselves. Sherry is not less popular among us than

Murillo, in spite of the numerous bad copies of the one which are passed off for undoubted originals, and butts of the other which are sold neat as imported.' His long sojourn in the south of Spain naturally gives him some right to speak with authority *de omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis* pertaining to that country. But his remarks upon sherry savour more of the amateur than the *aficionado*, who has lived beside his butts until the unpromising Mosto by slow degrees becomes the sherry of commerce, to ultimately find its way into the decanter of the connoisseur. He devotes a chapter to sherry, which he tells us is—'A wine which requires more explanation than many of its consumers imagine; it is grown in a limited nook of the Peninsula, on the south-western corner of Sunny Andalusia. This wine, it is said, was first introduced into England about the time of Henry VII., whose close alliance with Ferdinand and Isabella was cemented by the marriage of his son with their daughter.' This same daughter, if Chappuis is to be credited, complained bitterly of the quality of the wine her erratic husband supplied her with at the time he was suing for the divorce. So that it is evident there were sherries and sherries even at that time. There is a tradition that the 'first gentleman of Europe,' when Prince of Wales, enjoyed the hospitality of the then Lord Mayor, who produced some very choice brown sherry from his private cellar; this His Royal Highness appreciated so much as to put a goodly supply under his royal waistcoat, and from that day the fate of Madeira was sealed, and sherry commenced to reign in its stead. Ford says: 'The improved quality of the wine was its own recommendation; but as the fashion influences everything, the vogue was finally established by Lord Holland, who on his return from Spain introduced superlative sherry at his undeniable table,' where no doubt the consumption was considerable, as he entertained liberally.

Most of the denunciations launched against sherry as a wholesome and economical domestic wine may be traced to persons sentimentally or commercially interested in localities other than those where 'the vineyards of sunny Spain yield their golden treasures.' Naturally our French neighbours, with that charming turn for profitable sarcasm which is their forte, airily

dismiss Spanish wines as 'broth.' This is so far justifiable only as it translates the technical term *caldo*, used for the vinous produce of a district by the initiated, into its French and English equivalents. At the same time, with an eye to profit, many million gallons of these well-abused *caldos* have been imported into France — some say rechristened — and greedily consumed there or re-exported since their own vineyards have failed to yield sufficient crops. I remember reading of a literary English traveller who, after enjoying his fill of *Amontillado* in a Jerez bodega, expressed himself charmed with what he termed the 'bottled sunshine;' but upon being informed how the great wine of commerce is created by the blender's art, he was shocked, and thus apostrophises his English reader—'You think you are imbibing "bottled sunshine." Bah! it is Daffy's elixir, a mixture of many vintages.' In no case is the proverbial dictum, that 'a little learning is a dangerous thing,' more apt than in the treatment by the uninitiated of this vexed question of blending. It has been said that if you want a table you must look for it in the carpenter's shop, and not in a timber-yard. For the last eighty years, if not much longer, the sherry of commerce has been a blend of many vintages, but every component part of the blend is strictly the juice of the Spanish grape. This at once settles the question of adulteration. Art critics are maliciously said to be artists who have failed to paint successful pictures; in the same sense the trade critic of blended sherry is generally one who has failed to blend. Any tyro can mix half a dozen vintages of sherry together, but mixing is not blending. Very little appreciative sense of smell or palate, or none at all, may suffice for the mixer, but to become a blender you must have all these and genius as well, supplemented by a long and laborious training.

You may give any fool a box of colours, brushes, and a canvas, but you must have an artist to paint a picture; so it is with sherry. The most attractive wine to the eye and palate, and that which secures most commendation from the connoisseur, is, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, a judiciously blended sherry —not a mixture, but a blend. Jerez grape juice judiciously combined has made sherry in the past the leading wine of commerce in England,

and much of the discredit which has fallen of late years upon the produce of the Jerez vineyards has been caused by the shipment, under the name of Natural Sherry, of immature unblended grape juice, pure and genuine enough, no doubt, but still not agreeable. The first necessity for every wine to secure general acceptation is that it must be agreeable, and agreeable sherry is only secured by judicious combination. Brût champagne may be fashionable here and there as a fad, but no one will have the hardihood to assert it is as pleasant as the blended wine usually shipped under long-established brands. Sherry may for the moment be out of fashion, but we need not despair; fashions change, and dealers in popular wines, compelled by circumstances or nature, take liberties with the public, when the demand exceeds supply and vintages prove unpropitious. The rising generation is said to smoke too much and feed too rapidly. They might well emulate their fathers, who lived less exciting lives and enjoyed in moderation their liquor. Excess should not be tolerated, but good fellowship stimulated. There is plenty of good sherry to be had, and it will not disagree with you if you do not disagree with it. Many a host will be only too glad if his guest will give him the chance to defer the coffee and discuss an extra glass or two of 'the old nutty.' The ladies will also gladly accept the infliction, as it will admit of a more lengthy discussion of the fashions, and allow a little extra 'harmless scandal' over the tea-table.

A VISIT TO A JEREZ BODEGA.

'SEVILLE to Jerez and Cadiz: rail ninety-five miles, three trains daily.' So says Murray's Handbook for Spain. Also, 'Jerez is a well-built, clean-looking, flourishing town; population, 55,924,' and 'is celebrated for its wines.' The Bodegas or wine cellars (which, by the way, are all above ground, and not cellars at all) are the lions of Jerez. Each one is a true Temple of Bacchus, some of them holding as much as 14,000 butts (of 660 ordinary wine bottles each). Gonzalez, Misa, Garvey, Cosens, Domecq, Pemartin are the leading lions of this vinous menagerie; every Bodega being gorged with young, middle-aged, and old costly sherry, each and all worthy a visit and examination, if the palate be in a healthy and appreciative condition. According to Murray, 'Although

THE ALAMEDA, JEREZ. *Drawn by Vierge.*

the buildings themselves are mere huge low sheds, and wanting in architectural proportions, the Bodegas of Cosens have, however, some architectural pretensions, the supports to each span of roof being circular columns, with finished capitals, an improvement upon the square and unsightly pillars common to the older buildings.' Fortified with a letter of introduction, our travellers decide upon a visit to the Bodega with 'some architectural pretensions,' and accordingly, safely landed at the Jerez station, transfer themselves into a commodious tram-car (Bombo), which traverses the principal streets of the vinous city, depositing them safe and sound at the end of a short but pretty Alameda, flanked at intervals on each side by commodious stone benches and young orange-trees. Passing up this Alameda, at the moment deserted, save by a wretched dog basking in the sun, and a mendicant airing his rags—in the evening all Jerez, fans and mantillas, will be present, when bachelors should beware—we cross sharply to the right, as directed by our guide, and stand before an unpretentious doorway, which, in answer to the bell, flies open (sesame fashion), and a servant on an upper floor graciously bids us enter. She descends, and in due course conducts us through a marble patio, clean and cool, leading into a small garden, a very wilderness of sweet-smelling flowers and odorous tea-roses. Passing onwards through a trellis gate, we enter a larger garden, thickly studded with orange and other umbrageous trees, well watered by irrigation. Brushing past the pendent branches of a wide-spreading pepper-tree, we enter a corridor extending along the whole Bodega frontage, enclosed with glass, and furnished with seats at convenient distances. Here we are introduced to the managing partner, and present our credentials in form. After a few moments' conversation and a dozen whiffs of our cigarettes, we pass through another door into the veritable Temple of Bacchus, an oblong building of fair height and considerable depth, a wilderness of wine casks piled with mathematical precision in tiers three and four high. Round the building we notice several hydrants as a precaution, we are informed, against fire. Jerez, by the way, has not only an abundant but an excessive supply of splendid water from a neighbouring mountain, and of this vinous city it is true to say you have 'Water, water, every-

where,' and no lack of it, or wine, for drinking or domestic purposes. We are courteously conducted through the maze of casks, a vinous odour pervading the atmosphere, and after traversing the several Bodegas, inspecting the steaming apparatus for casks, and being stunned by the now happily checked hammering of the coopers, we return to the first Bodega, where a shipment of sherry is being prepared for London. Every utensil used for transferring wine from the Bodega butts to the shipping cask is washed, scraped, and scrubbed, as if for dairy use, strict cleanliness being a *sine quâ non* in every Bodega. The more delicate sherries being as sensitive to odour as milk or to stain as a lady's white satin dress, everything in the smallest degree offensive to sight or smell is banished from the neighbourhood of the grape juice. Finishing our stroll through the several Bodegas, with their monotonous tier upon tier of butts and toneles, we are ushered into a snug little room enclosed by a glass partition, where the tasting and examination of samples are the constant occupation of our genial host. Regiment after regiment of bottles surround us; most of them small square flint ones, containing samples of each mark of wine shipped to all parts of the world during the year. Others, both quaint and unsteady on their base (the latter possibly out of respect for the liquor they hold), contain samples to be examined and critically compared when purchases have to be made to fill up gaps caused by shipments. Expressing some curiosity to see sherry in the rough, our host at once pours a small quantity from each of several samples into London dock glasses, polished as new pins, desiring us to give him the advantage of our judgment. Some are clear, others slightly turbid. Anticipating our remark, we are told that clarification, condition, as it is termed, is quite a secondary consideration; many sherries lose body and flavour by being refined, although the whites of eggs or isinglass are the only materials used for the purpose. Thus, some loss of flavour and substance is necessary to secure brilliancy in the decanter. Using coloured glasses, as is usual with hock, would of course conquer the difficulty; but the prejudice in favour of brightness in the decanter is like the laws of the Medes and Persians, and the shipper dare not set it at defiance. The first specimen we taste

is somewhat harsh and bitter to our uneducated palate; another, more delicate in colour and flavour, appears poor and weak; another, with a golden tinge, bites the tongue like quinine; the next is sweet wine, and very nice for a lady at dessert; another, slightly bitter, seems to have but little taste or smell to recommend it, an embodiment of neutrality. 'Now,' said our host, 'I have introduced you into the timber yard; this is our raw material. Shall I show you what we have to do to improve nature, round off and polish her imperfections, and render her acceptable "to the general"?' Then, taking a graduated glass, and pouring a certain proportion from each of the samples, the blend is handed to us, and lo! we find on our palate an agreeable sherry. 'This is our art,' explains our host, 'and composes nine-tenths of our business. What the public require is not timber, but chairs and tables; these are the rank and file of our army with which we have to fight; they are the letters of the alphabet, which the scientist, the scholar, and the poet mould into science, literature, and poetry, genius making the selection and deciding the proportions, of course. You say "genius," well perhaps aptitude is a better word; those with aptitude produce what I should term blends, those who have it not produce mixtures, but the final test, the consumer's palate, we find by experience, prefers the blend to the mixture, or the raw material. In addition to our rank and file, we have officers who need little or no education. Here is a Solera of Oloroso, thirty years old, and here another, ten. The first you can only sip, the other you can drink in reasonable quantity, and like it; both are vintage wines, and have not been blended. At the same time a judicious blend of equal value would be more generally appreciated. Of course, in all matters where taste is concerned, all we have to do is to study that taste, and guide it if we can. All sherries fall under three classes, more or less modified by vintage results and rearing: the Fino or delicate type; the Oloroso or heavier type; and Basto, the coarsest and commonest. These in their unblended state meet about twenty per cent. of our demand; they remain "caviare to the general," like Brût champagne. We do not blend for amusement, but to foster consumption; the public are our masters, and what they ask for we readily supply. Unfortunately, they are content to give fabulous

prices for champagne, but expect drinkable sherry to be supplied at a ridiculously low price. Such is impossible, and the attempt under high-sounding names to force into consumption young immature flavourless grape juice of poor vintages has had more to do in checking the demand for sherry than any savant or doctor. Yes, perhaps you are strictly in order in terming the sherry supplied to the ordinary wine-drinker as "manufactured," still nothing but grape juice is used in the "manufacture," and no artificial process, save that of "fining, to make it clear to the eye." If a success, the more adequate word might be "blending:" that suggests harmony; "mixing" and manufacture, discord. We are simply the servants of Nature, and seek to aid her whenever we can do so; she is a just task-mistress, but compels us to work on her lines. No experience has as yet guided us how to make bad wine good, or worthless grape juice into fine sherry. The grapes are carefully pressed, and the Mosto left to ferment in the casks until the following spring; it is then carefully drawn from the lees into fresh casks, and stored for future use. Wine from the same vines, made at the same time, does not give the same result; the precise limit which the fermentation reaches decides all. Science, however, is silent upon the subject, while we find the grapes from similar vines yield Fino, Oloroso, Basto, Amontillado, and vinegar. From ten to twenty per cent. yields Fino, leaving eighty for the Oloroso, etc., varying at each vintage, probably as the temperature varies during the period of fermentation. I will now show you the unblended wines as they lie in the casks. This is a Fino, shipped under the mark of Tia Maria, delicate in flavour, with aroma and a pale straw colour. What is this floating on the surface—it looks like chickweed from a stagnant pond? That we term 'Flor' or Flower, and only the choicest specimens grow it; it imparts richness and flavour, and falls to the bottom—when blended and cleared with isinglass or eggs. This again is a freak of nature, and is called Amontillado; it is stouter, more aromatic, and more "flavoury" than the Fino. And so we pass on to the Oloroso, smelling only the Basto and vinegar. This is a Solera of Fino, used alone, and in blends for shipment. After drawing off a portion, the cask is filled up with the nearest sample we can

find to insure similarity of character and flavour, then a few months later we again use a portion; this goes on year after year, and insures a continuity of style, flavour, and age. So with the Oloroso, etc. Secrets, we have none; we are simply servants. Nature supplies us with an article which we have to treat respectfully and intelligently, and I only wish she would give us quality at all times; perhaps she does so, but then there is good quality and bad quality, or rather, as no woman is ugly, only less handsome, so sherry is always good, but some very much "less better." At any rate Nature supplies us in this province with grape juice which commences at perfection and ends at something very different in the direction of abominable. Purchase from a respectable wine-merchant, who knows his business, and you will always secure "value for your money." I only fear, now there are such facilities for rapid transit, he may run his stock too low. 'Sherry gains a mellowness after a few months in your English climate which it never acquires here.' And so with rather mixed ideas as to the qualities of sherry, and after a long nap in the train, we find ourselves safe again at Cadiz.

The Sherry vintage is for the Jerezans the event of the year, and although the bull-fight may engender more enthusiasm, it is evanescent in comparison with *La Vendimia*. Bread and bulls may be bracketed as popular pabulum; but not only bread and beef, but rent, wages, savings, and interest on invested capital, are comprised within the four corners of the annual vintage. The barber who shaves you is a standard authority on bulls and bull-fighters; but the vintage touches his pocket more even than the lottery appeals to his dollars. Wherever production extends in any wine-growing country, as a rule, the production of inferior wine increases. I use the term 'inferior' advisedly, because it realizes a lower price in the market than that which is accepted as 'superior.' At no time was the dead level of mediocrity more apparent than it is to-day. Cheapness is a rage. The present generation is not curious about its vinous potations. Our social arrangements tend to cut short that lingering over the walnuts and the wine which characterized our less nervous, less dyspeptic, and less impressionable sires. From the date when the Fourth George made brown sherry fashionable until a decade since,

sherry steadily increased in consumption, and the well-to-do Englishman, agriculturalist, merchant, and tradesman avoided 'the potations,' and was more than content with good sound sherry, for which he was willing to pay a fair and equitable price, while the Government realized a good round sum annually from import duty.

CHAPTER II.

SHERRIS SACK.

WHETHER the sack of Cadiz by Essex gave a fillip to the appreciation of sherry in England, or the taste had earlier taken root, is matter for historical research, but about this

period Sack becomes a familiar word in our literature; and it may be that Essex, his pikemen and arquebusiers, helped themselves freely to such of the liquor as they found stored at San Fernando, Puerto, and Cadiz, filling their homeward-bound fleet with many casks of the 'sacked' sherry, and thus sacked sherry or sherry sack became the generally accepted designation for the Andalusian wine of commerce of to-day.

Sherry may be credited with having saved a second sack of Cadiz, for from 'The Voyage to Cadiz in 1625' we learn that 'The Commisarie General by my order did give forth some Buttes of Sacke to the Colonells, by way of provision for beuverage, whereof their is a just account kept. . . . My Lord Lieutenant with the rest of the armie marched on two or three miles beyond Hercules Pillars, where they found the houses of diverse gentlemen and Cavalliers utterly forsaken by the inhabitants, and all their goods carried away save onely what was left to doe mischiefe; for there was found in these houses exceeding great plenty of New Wyne in iron-bound caskes—four or five hundred or more. . . . Here the soldiers of his Lo^ps. special favor, having obtayned a competent prop^n. of a Butte of Wyne for every regiment therewith to refresh themselves, were so disordered in the expence (or using) thereof, that some of the worser sorte, being first distempered therewith, sett on the reste, and grew to demand more Wyne in such disorder and with such violence that they contemned all command, and sett light not onlie by their ordinary officers, but even by the more ancient commanders, not respecting my Lord Lieutenant himselfe, nor abstayned from slighting his authority, using base and contemptuous wordes both against his person and place. . . . Noe wordes of exhortation, noe blows of correction would restrayne them; but, breaking with violence into the roomes where the Wynes were, cryeing out that they were King Charles hys men, and fought for him, careing for no man els, They claimed all the Wyne as their owne, due to them for their service, and proceeded to distemper themselves therewith still more, 'till in effect the whole army, except only the commanders, was all drunken, and in one common confusion, some of them shooting one att another among themselves; nor could this mischiefe be wholly restrained, though by the

'THE WATER-DRINKING MOOR WAS SWEPT FROM THE SOIL.'

special command of his Lordship all the reste of the wyne was staved with as much expedicion as might be, ffor then with their hattes and head-pieces they dipped it upp in the cellars, where it swame about, swearing and protesting, manie of them, that they had not tasted a drop of wyne that day nor the day before, though they were absolutely drunken when they said soe.'

That no little enthusiasm existed in Elizabeth's day for this generous wine the pages of Shakespeare may be taken as a proof positive. Other poets, however, of the time are not silent—

'Fetch me Ben Jonson's scull and fill't with sacke,
Rich as the same he dranke, when the whole packe
Of jolly sinners pledg'd, and did agree
It was no sinne to be as drunk as hee.
If there be any weaknesse in the wyne
There's vertue in the cuppe to mak't divine,
This muddy drench of ale does tast too much
Of Earth, the Malt retains a scurvy touch
Of the dull Hynde that sowed it, and I feare
There's heresie in Hops; give Calvyn Beere.'

Fynes Moryson in his *Itinerary*, 1617, writes:

'Clownes and vulgar men onely use large drinking of Beere or Ale, how much soever it is esteemed excellent drinke even among strangers; but Gentlemen *garrawse* onely in wine.'

Beer still holds its own as the larger consumption in the England of Victoria, the fact being that of the consumption of alcohol in the three kingdoms wine only stands for a modest two per cent., beer and spirits being accountable for the other ninety-eight.

The export of sherry to England, according to the archives of Jerez, was in 1697, 15,794 butts; in 1797, 4,518 only; and in 1884, 46,000. The yield of the vineyards around Jerez must have always reached important dimensions, for during the long period covered by the Moorish wars the Spanish warriors quartered near Xeres, or Jerez, were liberal consumers. How far the conquest of Granada may have been aided by the liquor of Jerez, historians are silent; at the same time we know the production and consumption were both considerable, while the water-drinking Moor was swept from the soil by the wine-drinking Spaniard and 'his trusty pike.'

The Jerezano of to-day inherits an experience and practical knowledge of the management of sherry from its cradle to the wine-glass unique in history, and it is amusing to read the 'cock-sure' criticism of those who may have a perfect knowledge of chemistry as an applied science,

but are simply theorists in a Bodega. The amateur savant is a nuisance when he has no practical knowledge of the subject he essays to treat. In the first place, the Jerez grape has to be pressed under a tropical temperature—the scientist tells us the temperature should not exceed sixty of our table; the fermentation practically gallops, while science tells us it should only amble. It is like the artist who depicted the duke standing up and the duchess sitting down; while the critic cited all the canons of art to show that the duchess should have been standing and the duke reclining; the artist naturally defended himself by asserting that when he painted his picture the duke was standing and the duchess in the chair. So it is with the making of sherry: we have to deal with Nature as she is, and not as science asserts she should be. The grapes gathered early in the day are heavy with dew, and, if not slightly dusted with a peculiar earth found on the spot, to absorb the moisture, pressed grape juice and dew create a rotten must, which rapidly becomes vinegar or putrid matter—anything but wine. This dusting is alluded to by Pliny as a practice in his day, and no doubt the early wine-makers of Jerez found experience as dear a school, as the scientific theorist of our own time would find his advice result in if followed in practice. Many millions of butts of sherry have been made, consumed and forgotten, on lines which intelligence, fortified by long experience, show to be practicable; and so long as science cannot discover how and in what way costly wine agreeable to the palate differs from that which is undrinkable, long experience clearly gains the day. I do not for one moment desire to underrate the value of chemical science applied to wine-making, but when experience proves that one method gives good wine while another gives vinegar, naturally the wine-maker follows the safer route, as he has to live and thrive by his industry. A stronger and more enduring race than the workers in the vineyard and Bodega exists nowhere. And their 'youth sublime' is nourished upon home-grown sherry as a rule, bull-fights and holidays excepted, when the fatted calf is killed and the tabernero vends his Manzanilla and Jerez Fino to a hard-working and temperate population—somewhat excitable it is true. No wonder if those, according to Dr. Johnson, who 'drink beer think beer,' that

the Jerezano extracts more vivacity from his potation than does Hodge at the village ale-house. Unfortunately differences are settled by the Jerezano's knife rather than the fist, but happily this becomes more rare as the schoolmaster extends his influence. Falstaff, in his famous monologue ('King Henry IV.'), alludes to sherris sack and fertile sherris. A very clever solution has been suggested by a Spaniard. Xeres seco is 'sherris sack;' Xerez fértil (produce of a rich soil), 'fertile sherris;' while burnt sack was simply brown sherry, the colour being given by 'boiled sherry must.'

Drawn by Vierge.

Canary sack, so called from its pale-straw colour, suggests the Spanish canaria, a canary bird. 'Bastard' may have been a corruption of *basto*, low or inferior.'

Everywhere the talk is sherry, everyone dabbles in little or much of the seductive fluid;

even the barber who shaves you has his little store behind his 'Barberia.'

With the exception of Shakespeare, the Elizabethan poets do not appear to have taken much notice of 'sherris sack.' At the same time the liquor must have been a general favourite, if any reliance may be placed upon the figures of importation by English and Dutch vessels during the reigns of Good Queen Bess and James. Falstaff doubtless had many followers in his appreciation of good sound sherry, and 'mine hosts' must have drawn dry many thousands of butts in the course of those reigns. According to the Coventry records (1575) Secretaries Smythe and Walsyngham had supplied to them, at a cost of 8s. 4d., 'a galon of Sacke, a galon of Claret wyne, a galon of whyte wyne and three pounds of Chereyes." It is to be hoped that these supplies served for more than one sitting, unless the secretaries had liberal assistance in disposing not only of the liquor, but the 'Chereyes' as well. Perhaps their stay in Coventry was a protracted one.

The Carthusians of Jerez had their vineyards. Their Bodega is now extinct, but their turtle and fish-ponds remain, like the Cartuja itself, in ruins. Possibly they only cultivated the vine for table-fruit, and made wine for sale or the sick brethren. The Church has always been scurvily treated by the profane vulgar, and the good fathers sadly maligned by the pen of the rhymer and the prejudice of the ignorant, albeit they fed the hungry and nursed the sick. In the present day I am afraid the rhymer might lay himself open to an action for libel had he printed the following, and the Carthusian brother cared to prosecute for defamation of character:

'In the days of the reign of Philip of Spain
When corpulent monks ruled the roast,
The stoutest of all had an appetite small,
But in Sherry the whole world could toast.
This Carthusian friar had a wondrous desire
To tipple the best he could find;
Reclined in his chair, before daintiest fare,
He cast all his cares to the wind.
In the cellars so cold of the monast'ry old
The bright wine of Jerez was stored,
And the cellarer gray, who tippled all day,
At vespers melodiously snored.
One cold winter's night this monk had a sad fright,
As he dozed in his old oaken chair;
The light it burned blue, he'd had flagons twice two,
When a vision with horns came the banquet to share.

Our Carthusian friar, in dismay the most dire,
Told his beads as fast as he might,
But the vision with horns punished his corns
While his hair stood on end with affright.
"Ha! ha! my good boy, I'm loath to annoy,
But no more Olla or Sherry for thee;
You've enjoyed your last glass and your time must now pass
In the Kingdom of Sulphur with me."
Our "Cartujo" declares he seized his few hairs
And battered his nose on the floor.
The cell full of smoke, he felt fit to choke
As he stumbled to grope for the door.
At the dawn of the morn, the abbot shaven and shorn,
Found "Cartujo" asleep on the floor,
But our Carthusian declares he was saying his prayers
When the good Abbot opened the door.
But the cellarer gray, who tipples all day,
Winks and says, "'Tis fustian outright:
He fell on his nose when his Sherry-warmed toes
Refused to preserve him upright."
The moral we learn, into rhyme I will turn,
Quantum suff. is as good as a feast;
One flagon of wine is enough when you dine,
Twice two made "Cartujo" a beast.'

In a polite letter-writer of the period, Day's 'English Secretorie' (1592) is the following: 'Seaven Buts of Secke—which cost the first penny Seventeen Duckats the Butte'—shipped by this factor to his master from Cadiz no doubt. Other sacks may have been sweet, but the use in this case of secke suggests dry and not sweet wine. Minsheu gives as the French equivalent of sacke—Vin sec d'Espagne;'—and despite the commentators, I am inclined to think that Falstaff's 'sherris sacke' was dry sherry after all—or why necessary to add sugar, for those who preferred it sweet? In Gervase Markham's 'English Housewife,' a book published very shortly after Shakespeare's death, and probably written several years before that event—a book professing to contain the opinions of the greatest physicians—the fourth chapter, entitled The Ordering, Preserving and Helping all Sorts of Wines,' after enumerating many wines which may have been sweet, finishes thus: 'Sack if it be Seres (as it should be) you shall know it by the mark of a cork burned on one side of the bung and they be ever full gage, and so are other Sacks, and the longer they lye the better they be.' Full gage, unless full measure, is a little obscure, but there is nothing in this sentence to imply that Sack of Seres was a sweet wine; moreover, the treatment suggested for want of condition in 'The Mystery of Vintners' indicates that the wine

must have been shipped soon after the vintage, and not retained in the Bodegas, as at present, until it has passed the period of its infantile maladies and becomes ripe, merchantable, and ready for the decanter. Of the Commonwealth period I note one song alluding to sherry, and that I believe is in manuscript and hardly deserves printing :

'Come hither, jealous brothers, and leave your disputation,
I will recount where is a fount which leads to mitigation;
The virtue of which liquor, once tasted with repletion,
Will cleare your eies and make you wise, and fill you with discretion.

'And this is cal'd Old Sack, Old Sack;
It's fisicale good diet
To cure the man cal'd Puritan,
And make him sleep in quiet.

'Tis Catholic old Sherry which poysons a precision
And brands his bane, because of shame, and stains his exposition;
Yet better to content him no means I can conjecture,
But to reade to this blockheade on Sherry Sack a lecture.'

Mistress Eleanor Gwyn, who by the way seems to have been a dilatory paymistress, was charged six shillings for two bott'es of sack.

There is extant a poetical production which has for its theme Sherry, and which is evidently from the pen of one whose knowledge must have been the result of some training, as he deals with his subject not as an amateur, but as an expert. It is entitled *Pasquils Palinodia and his progresse to the Taverne, where, after the survay of the Sellar, you are presented with a pleasant pynte of Poeticall Sherry.* London, 1619.' It is unfortunately anonymous, and far too lengthy to print *in extenso.* The author writes: 'Concerning the Poem, although I shall be thought to be *sutor ultra crepidam*, yet, in my opinion, it is a tollerable Pint of Poeticall Sherry; and if the Muses seller afford no worse wine, it will make sacke better respected and goe down the merrier.' In his introduction to the reprint of this work the late Payne Collier writes: 'This very lively, clever, and amusing production must have been written under the cheerful inspiration of the cup of sherry which it celebrates. It is too long to have been struck off at a heat, and we can easily suppose that the author dipped his nose in his glass as often as he dipped his pen in his standish.'

The following extracts indicate that the author

must have had something beyond the knowledge of the amateur to guide him. Speaking of the vintner's cellar, he writes incidentally of sherry vintaging :

'Yet none of these are more hardly used
Than is that true, good fellow, Sherry Sack.
If you should heere how much he is abused
You needs must weepe, or else remorse you lacke.
Trodden with feete, sold like a slave, rack't, jumbl'd,
Let bloud, drawn dry, and by fell porters tumbl'd,
And least al these base wrongs should not provoke him,
With Yesso they him purge, with Lime they choake him.'

''Tis not the virgin liquor of the grape
That turns a man into a filthy swine,
A goat, an asse, a lyon, or an ape ;
Such beastly fruits spring never from the vyne.'

Again—

'The broth with barly sodden,
Compares not with this licker ;
The drayman's beere is not so cleere,
And foggy ale is thicker.
Matheglin is too fulsome,
Cold Cyder and raw Perry ;
And all drinks stand with cap in hand,
In presence of Old Sherry.'

Alluding to those who imbibed too freely he writes :

'And thus in devilish counsell there they sit,
Till with old sherry they have drowned their wit ;
Then druncke at midnight home the knave doth creep,
And beats his wife, and helpless falls asleep.

'And what excuse doth then the bankrupt frame
For his profuse and prodigal expence ?
Mary forsooth, his wife, did cause the same,
Against whose scolding tongue there's no defence ;
For when a man at home cannot be merry,
Hee's forc'd to run abroad to drink *Old Sherry*.

. . . . . .

'To cure my Muse there was no other charme,
But with a cup of sacke to make her warme,
And heat her braines, which, as all poets finde,
Doth quicken wit and qualifies the minde.

'Strong-hoop'd in bonds are here constrained to tarry,
Two kinsmen neare allyde to *Sherry-Sacke :*
Sweet Malligo and delicate Canary,
Which warme the stomacks that digestion lacke.

It is curious to note that Sweet Pedro Ximenez is alluded to as follows :

'They had a page whom, if I can make sweeter,
I'll let you know they call him *See me Peter*.
Brisk blushing claret and faire maiden *Sherry*,
Make men courageous, loving, wise, and merry ;
It is adulterous wine that plays the puncke,
And robs men of their reason, being druncke.'

In allusion to the Mermaid Tavern :

'And on this day the feast to magnifie
Of merry Bacchus, which did heare reside,
Within this Taverne met a company
Of true, kinde, honest hearts quite void of pride,
That good companions and good husbands are,
And know both how to spend and how to spare,
That can be merry, and yet never quarrell,
Nor drowne their wits and reason in a barrell.

'And here, with many welcomes, were received
My Muse and I, and fell to drinking *Sherry*,
Where, after some few cups, as I conceived,
So it fell out my Muse grew passing merry,

'And gan to sing, like to a joviall drinker,
In praise of *Sack* and tun'd it to the *Tinker*.'

Here is the ditty to the tune of 'The Tinker':

'Come hither, learned sisters,
And leave your forked mountaine,
I will tell you where is a well
Doth far exceed your fountaine,
Of which if any Poet
Doe taste in some good measure,
It straight doth fill both head and quill
With ditties full of pleasure,
And makes him sing, "Give me *Sacke*, *old Sacke*, boyes,
To make the Muses merry;
The life of mirth, and joy of earth,
Is a cuppe of good old *Sherry*.

'"It is the true *Nepenthes*,
Which makes a sad man frollicke,
And doth redress all heaviness,
Cold, agues, and the chollicke.
It takes away the crutches
From men both lame and crippled,
And dryes the pose and rheums of nose
If it be soundly tipled.
Then let us drink old *Sacke*, *old Sacke*, boyes,
Which makes us fond and merry;
The life of mirth, and joy of earth,
Is a cuppe of good old *Sherry*.

'"If drunkards are unruly
Whom *Claret* hath inflamed,
With a cuppe or two this *Sacke* can doe,
They sleep and so are tamed.

'"The citizen loves fiddling,
That he may strike and caper;
The scholler lookes upon his bookes,
And pores upon his paper;
The gentle bloud likes hunting,
Where dogs do trace by smelling,
And some love hawks, some groves, and walks,
And some a handsome dwelling;
Yet all these without *Sacke*, *old Sacke*, boyes,
Makes no man kindely merry.

'"A quart of *Sacke* well burned,
And drunk to bed-ward wholey,
I dare be bold doth cure the cold,
And purgeth melancholy.
It comforts aged persons,
And seemes their youth to render,
It warmes the braines, it fills the vaines,
And fresh bloud doth ingender.'"

Here are the concluding lines:

'When any Muse with rage is over-swaid,
Let poets learne it is a soveraign balme
To wet their pipes with good facetious *Sherry*,
Which makes them jocund and most sweetly merry.
And thus I bring her home where now she rests,
The feast is done, y'are welcome all, my guests.'

'Sacke sapit omnia.'

Our author lays such stress throughout on old sherry, that it is tolerably clear age was recognised as a merit in Elizabeth's and James's days; but whether the wine was shipped from Spain young and kept by the vintners, or whether the Spanish grower had discovered how superior it became when carefully racked and tended in his own Bodega, can only be conjectured. Fashion for the moment snubs sherry. Champagne will have its day; but in the end the Briton will return to his first love. Already there are signs that the frugal housekeeper finds sherry economical, as it does not, like champagne or claret, deteriorate by being left on ullage. 'Patience and shuffle the cards,' must be the sherry merchant's motto.

'What wine do you suppose Shakespeare preferred, Doctor? Sack, my learned friend—dry sherry. All the poets of the Elizabethan age were Sack-drinkers—Ben Jonson, Beaumont, Fletcher, Marlowe, Raleigh, Chapman, Spenser, Sydney; so, too, was Herrick.

'"Thy Isles shall lack
Grapes, before Herrick leave canarie Sack"'

(quoting still from the 'Sayings of Dr. Bushwhacker, New York, 1867'). 'Other writers of his time, sir—Carew, Wither, Cowley, Waller, Crawshaw, Broome. In the time of the rump, sir—

'"All worldly care is madness,
But Sacke and good cheare
Will, in spite of our fear,
Inspire our souls with gladness."

Cervántes was a sherry-drinker, Doctor? Speaking of Cervántes, sir, the Elizabethan era should be called the age of sack, sir. Look at those two great writers, Shakespeare and Cervántes, each a transcendent genius, both living at the same time, both drinking sack (of Seres) or sherry constantly. "If I had a thousand sons, the first human principle I would teach them should be to forswear thin potations and addict themselves to sack."'

Despite the erudite enthusiasm of Dr. Bushwhacker, most of his later authorities allude to

wine generally more than to sherris sack in particular. Although distillation is said to have been discovered by the Moors in the twelfth century, and no doubt practised medicinally in Spain, it is clear that the necessity for using sugar, honey, and spices in England, as preservatives and antidotes to acid, indicates that the value of 'distilled wine' as a preservative was then, if not unknown, not generally practised; and as later writers complain of the more general use of wine amongst the 'commoner sorts,' this discovery of a valuable preservative probably increased the commerce in the cheaper growths of Jerez considerably.

The Iron Duke passed through Jerez in the autumn of 1812 on his way to Cadiz, from whence he embarked for Lisbon, and Waterloo sherry is still extant both in fact, fame, and name. Napoleon stands godfather to a tonel of choice sherry in one, if not more, patriarchal Bodega of the vinous city; while Noah exists in name at least in one more modern.

CHAPTER III.

SHERRYANA.

ONE of the earlier numbers of *Punch* there are two small unpretending sketches, full, however, of humour, evidently from the pencil of Thackeray. One depicts an individual sauntering along the sea-shore,

near Cadiz; suddenly he discovers a wine-bottle, and exclaims, 'Sherry, I hope.' The companion cut depicts the same individual, disgusted at the discovery that the uncorked bottle contains moral leaflets only, giving vent to his feelings in the expression, 'Tracts, by Jingo!'

Sherry of late years has been treated to quite a flood of 'Tracts, by Jingo!' Opposition wine-dealers have naturally no particular affection for 'bottled Andalusian Sunshine,' and favour sherry with more kicks than halfpence. Continental savants give us the component parts of the fluid, burn them to an ash and extract the alcohol, but omit to tell us why good wine gives the same chemical results as bad, and from whence arises the presence of so many different flavouring ethers, what they are and why they are where they are. Sherry is abused by the interested and the ignorant, because, being made and preserved without sulphur, it generally requires as an antiseptic an addition of its own distillate to ensure condition and gradual improvement as age ripens it. The savants omit to tell us that with the addition of distilled wine are combined all those flavouring ethers which make the difference between superior and inferior quality, judged from the palate point of view; then, again, our critics speak slightingly of our careful and judicious 'blending,' terming the product of our long experience and artistic skill *caldo*—'broth.' No blending, by however skilful a hand, will make bad wine good; like a vulgar woman, however well-appointed she may be, the moment she opens her mouth she discovers her breeding.

The theorists assure us that we are scientifically wrong in our vintaging, but experiments on their lines land us with vinegar, while what they term 'our rule of thumb' gives us sherry. Of course, under different conditions of climate different results might ensue. The grapes are gathered, sorted, and pressed carefully, but the heat at the vintage is generally tropical, and the 'must' is made on the spot under conditions we are powerless to control. After all is said and done, we claim to give the wine-drinker the finest specimen of white wine the world produces, and when claret becomes less fashionable, and the differential wine duty abolished, sherry will again hold its own against all comers. In the meantime we have nothing to hide: Providence gives us inferior wine, and we sell it cheap; she

THE SINCEREST FORM OF FLATTERY.

gives us good, and we sell it dearer. No genius yet has been able to make bad wine good by scientific investigation or chemical management. The sternest and most unerring laboratory is the 'human palate,' and to that alone we appeal. We can only hope to live down ignorant and interested detraction by exercising patience and sending good quality. Sherry, is an economical wine; you can keep it in the decanter for weeks without deterioration, while 'the lodging-house cat,' like a sensible animal, always prefers it to claret or burgundy.

Imitation, without doubt, is the sincerest form of flattery: on the other hand, lacking semblance, the flattery becomes insult. Sherry which is not sherry, can hardly claim to be classed under the head of imitation or flattery; and it is anything but adulation to term the so-called 'Temperance sherry' sherry at all. The metropolis of sham jewellery seems desirous to add sham sherry to its many mercantile achievements in the imitative line. 'That which we call a rose, by any other name will smell as sweet,' is true enough. Does the same hold good of sherry? We trow not! The home-made compound may be sherry to the eye, it can scarcely be sherry to the taste; the ingenuity of man is great, but at sixpence a quart, including the bottle, the ordinary mind may with reason claim to be sceptical—anything you like, but not 'sherry' of Xeres in Spain. Our versatile neighbours across the Channel are adepts at the art of vinous manipulation, but they do draw the line at wine. They christen boldly their efforts of genius with attractive titles. Lafite, we are credibly informed, is often found on the label, while the vintage within the bottle never saw the vines so carefully tended at that famous Château. Still it is wine of some sort, and real Lafite must of necessity always be 'caviare to the general.' So the home-made sherry can hardly claim imitative recognition as the produce of the 'sunny slopes' surrounding Jerez de la Frontera. Again, we are not familiar with the Hamburg vineyards, but sherry seems to be produced on the banks of the Elbe more cheaply than on its 'native heath.' The wine-manipulators of Cette claim to give you any wine you ask for, from Tokay to sherry, from vinous pitch-and-toss to manslaughter. Of course the imitation is not a bit like the original; but, as with Sam Weller's pieman, these manipulators seem to consider all merit rests 'in the seasoning.'

Nevertheless, is it not a little hard that the name of sherry should be dragged through the mire, taken in vain, and the genuine article discredited by enterprising foreigners, and its appellation claimed for a native liquor at sixpence a quart? We would rather these imitators should not filch from us 'our good name.' They cast their net widely, seeking to secure within its meshes both the 'bon vivant' and the alcohol abhorrer. Happily the Inland Revenue authorities have taken charge of the home-made manufactures, and I only wish they could as readily tackle the other pirates who try their best to make us unfortunate sherry-growers 'bankrupt in fortune and reputation.' Three patriotic M.P.s have already donned their armour, and entered the lists as champions of 'pure beer;' will not some one of our legislators, in want of occupation and a cry, break a lance in defence of maligned sherry? Cette, Hamburg, and Britain are sad culprits in the direction of misdirected enthusiasm, or, some might say, imposition. Probably even Sir William Harcourt might, upon respectful representation, be induced to make the 'amende honorable' by confessing that he had founded his judicial if not judicious opinion of that 'detestable liquid' when at Oxford from one of the triumvirate above alluded to. We give him the benefit of the doubt, at any rate, and accept his definition of Cette or Elbe sherry. 'Good wine needs no bush,' says the adage truly enough; still, the wine-merchant should not lose sight of the fact that sherry has been the mainstay of his business; he should bestir himself and show the public that real sherry is to be had, never better and never cheaper than in this year of grace 1887.

It must not be for a moment imagined that the growers of sherry, and those interested in fostering and extending its consumption, are either indifferent or blind to the advantages of scientific analysis and an examination of the cause of certain defects displayed at various periods between the pressure of the grape and its appearance in the decanter. Much progress has been made in the investigation, and valuable results secured; the exact limit of tartaric acid necessary to secure preservation has been decided by patient experiment, and the preservative influence of distilled wine defined to a nicety. How far these and more far-reaching experiments may

result on a large scale, time only will prove; these facts, however, remain, that brown sherry contains more natural preservatives than exist in the extremely pale sorts unless well aged, and that the reputation of sherry was created by golden-coloured wines; also that the export of young, immature, extremely pale descriptions has had much to do with the decline in the demand of late years. Still, despite the decrease in the consumption of sherry as well as that of all other wines, it still far distances any other white wine imported, and is gradually regaining its lost prestige; mainly lost, it must be admitted, by cupidity, if not ignorance. 'Fine feathers do not make fine birds,' neither do fine names make fine wines. The palate of the wine-drinker is naturally rendered fastidious by the import into this country of the produce of the finest vineyards of the world. The cream comes to us, whoever has to be content with the skim-milk.

'I am very ill!' plaintively remarked an Oxford undergraduate to his doctor; 'the college sherry has disagreed with me.'

'No, no,' replied the disciple of Galen. 'I know the wine well; it is you that have disagreed with the sherry.'

Much of the unreasonable prejudice against sherry arises from the fact that we are always anxious to fix upon the liquor as the cause of our digestive disarrangement, rather than excess in discussing the badly-dressed joint or highly-seasoned side-dish. We all remember Mr. Winkle's assertion that it was the pickled salmon, and not the punch, that caused the uncertainty of equilibrium from which he suffered. Neither the salmon nor the punch in moderation would be the cause, but the excess of one or both. The analyst discovers death in every pot: he gives you the component anatomy of wine, but cannot find any difference between genuine rubbish and the finest *crû*; hence, after all, Nature's analysis by means of the palate seems more to be relied upon than science, for your taste must be vitiated indeed if you cannot discover the difference between bad sherry and good Oloroso or Amontillado. The genuine growth of Jerez of a good vintage carefully nursed through all the disturbing vicissitudes of youth, placed in the decanter in proper condition, is superb tipple, let detractors say what they will. As I have already pointed out, imitation may be the sincerest form of flattery,

but it is hard that sherry should suffer in reputation because German and other wine manufacturers call their caricatures sherry. They are liquids, and may be stored or shipped in iron-bound sherry-shaped casks, but there the similarity ends. Those conversant with wine-growing in every country know that genuine grape-juice can always be found commencing at perfection, and ending in the abominable. The good is always dear, the bad cheap. Foreign capital is freely supplied to the Spanish sherry trade; a costly wine to grow, breed, and educate. Nature will not be hurried in her operations, and you can no more produce a matured sherry without years of patient watching, care, and skill, than you can expect a new-born babe to be created a ready-made senior wrangler.

Mr. Ruskin (in 'Præterita') whose worthy father was in his day one of the leading lights of the Sherry trade, and a most excellent judge of its merits, writes: 'The quality of the Macharundo vintage essentially fixed the standard of Xeres sack or dry seco Sherris or Sherry from the days of Henry V. to our own, the unalterable and unrivalled chalk-marl of it putting a strength into the grape which age can only enrich and darken—never impair.' Again, 'When we ventured to ask our artist friends' (Prout, Stanfield, Harding, de Wint, etc.) 'to rejoice with us, most of them came, I believe, with real pleasure. If the painters cared to say anything of pictures, they knew he understood; if they chose rather to talk of sherry, my father could and would with delight tell them more about it than any other person knew in England or Spain; and when the candles came, and the good jests over the nuts and olives, there was "frolic wine" in the flask at every right hand, such as that never Prince Hal or Jack Falstaff tasted cup of brighter or mightier.'

Temperance is one thing, enforced abstinence another: the former is in its way most praiseworthy, but the latter, to-day, is the more potent, being compelled by heavy taxation and a general lowering of values of commodities, commercial and agricultural, pinching the pocket of the well-to-do trading Englishman most painfully. In the year 1876 the income tax was fixed at twopence only, and it is not a little curious to note the result upon the vinous consumption of the United Kingdom, then and in 1886. By Christmas next the well-to-do Englishman will

have consumed less than he did ten years since. 12,604,350 bottles of claret, 2,131,044 of champagne, sauterne and chablis, 5,328,912 of port, 867,330 Spanish claret and Spanish port, 15,798,054 sherry from Spain, and 2,092,692 German, Colonial, Italian, Hungarian, etc.—in all, to be accurate, 38,822,382 bottles.

Mr. Sala, some 13 years since, observed that 'Sherry is a genteel drink; many well-to-do English people take some of this wine at their meals, some more afterwards,' and some a great deal more than is good for them, 'between their meals; it is a beverage of which one can drink a fair quantity without getting tipsy. Cheap claret is sour and sets your teeth on edge; Greek wines taste of resin; Hungarian are heady, rough and devoid of character; Italian are potent, ropy and bitter. Sherry is moderately strong, its colour is pleasing, its scent appetizing, its flavour is delicious.' If, according to Brillat-Savarin, 'he who discovers a new star adds to the conquest of science, but cannot be said to benefit the human race so much as he who discovers a new dish,' what shall be said of that genius who shipped the first butt of perfected sherry? Like the inventor of the plough, he remains unknown to fame, and we look in vain for his statue. This Jerezano must have been in the flesh long prior to 1500, as Andrewe Boorde in his 'Dyetary' (1542) indicates a vinous education as the result of long practical experience; surely sherry is clearly indicated when he writes:

'Chose your wyne after this sorte: it must be fragraunt and redolent, havynge a good odour and flavour on the nose; it must spryncle [be oily] in the cup whan it is drawne or put out of the pot into the cup; it must be colde and pleasaunt in the mouth; and it must be strong and subtyll of substaunce: And than moderately dronken, it doth actuate and doth quycken a man's wyttes, it doth comfort the hert, it doth reioyce all the powers of man, and doth nowrysshe them; it doth ingender good blode, it doth comforte and doth nowrysshe the brayne and all the body, it ingendreth heate, and it is good agaynst heuynes and pencyfulnes; it is ful of agylyte; wherefore it is medsonable. Furthermore the better the wyne is, the better humours it doth engender. "Wyne must not be to newe nor to olde, but hygh and hote wynes may be kepte longe."' A certain Captain Scott who 'did a book' on Spain half a century since, and who was

gently and good-humouredly castigated in the *Quarterly Review* by the late Richard Ford of Hand-book of Spain celebrity, gives in his book a sad account of the sanitary condition of, as he calls it, Xeres. 'Captain Scott, nauseated by these "Cloacamiasms," compares the city of wine to Cologne, where all the sweets are bottled up and hermetically sealed for exportation. The talk of the town is of wine, which is to Xeres what Nile water is to Cairo, a pleasure and a profit. The vinology, the pale and brown, sweet and dry, is all in our author's line; his speculations eclipse even the luculent corresponding chapter of Dr. Henderson, and will be more relished at mess-tables than his geographical discussions, the bore of which he at last confesses.' 'Sherry, as we drink it in England, is an artificial wine. Twenty vintages, differing in age, flavour and colour, are mingled until a *neat* article is made up. There is not much mischief nor mystery in the way things are managed at Xeres, where there is neither cider, Cape wine, nor Thames water' (nor Elbe sherry, nor Cette sherry, nor British sherry, nor Temperance sherry). Xeres was unknown for its wines by the ancients, who praised those of the neighbouring Nebrissa (Silius Italicus, iii. 393) [the modern Lebrija, five miles from Jerez], the city of Bacchus—

> '. . . Who first from out the purple grape
> Crushed the sweet juice of misused wine.'

Bacchus has now migrated to Xeres, where the Bodegas—his wine vaults—resemble cathedrals in size, and the divisions, like chapels, bear the names of the saints to whom they are dedicated. And no tutelar deities were ever worshipped by so many or such true believers; the hospitable proprietors overwhelm the stranger with libations; they handle the samples as a fond father does a pet baby—

> 'Tell all the names, lay down the law,
> *Que ça est bon! Ah, goutez ça!*'

The capataz, the chief butler, surrounded by his vinous family, passes a life of 'probation and savouring,' and becomes wonderfully sharp and accurate from long practice—most of the shippers of sherry are now their own capatazes so far as selecting and blending are concerned. The vineyards of Andalusia never yielded better wine than at present, the shippers were never keener

men of business, nor better masters of their craft, while the sherry-drinker never had better value than at the present moment, if he goes to the right market for it. Were the 'well-to-do Englishman' only a trifle more prosperous, and the income tax reasonable, enforced abstinence from sherry, etc., would be less widely spread. The real cause of the reduced consumption of wine is simply a question of means, and the 'well-to-do Englishman,' unlike the bookseller's parcel, is 'to be kept dry' unwillingly; while in the secrecy of his chamber he whispers,

'My poverty but not my will consents.'

Who shall say that the days of sherry are numbered? Facts present an inexorable logic. 'Soft, seductive, and not sweet!' exclaims an expert who attended the sale of the late Earl of Wilton's wines at Christie's. The 1820 sherry realized from 72s. to 78s. per dozen—good prices in these bad times, when agriculture and commerce languish, and the Stock Exchange, it is said, lives on its losses.

As I have shown, the cultivation of the vine in the neighbourhood of Jerez de la Frontera dates from a very early period of the world's history. Most Englishmen, I am afraid, are under the impression that that bibulous city is simply a collection of ordinary dwellings surrounded by vineyards, where they store that which the late Charles Dickens termed 'the cloudy fluid, served up by shabby waiters in vinegar cruets to disconsolate bachelors at second-rate restaurants, and miscalled sherry.'

The cultivation of the vine in the country surrounding Jerez, Xerez, or Xeres, can be traced to reasonably remote antiquity; and if the Romans did not introduce the manufacture of wine into Spain, they very sedulously fostered it, even attempting to acclimatize the vine in the moist and somewhat ungenial atmosphere of Britain. Be that as it may, the Roman patrician, like Falstaff, appreciated good wine, and preferred it old, for Horace boasts of Falernian 'born as it were with him,' or that reckoned 'its age from the Consul of the day.' It is more than probable that the Roman traders exported the wines of Spain—probably those of the coast westward of Tarragona—transporting them to Rome as competitors with Italy's more famous growths. Even Phyllis herself may have tippled the vintage of

Jerez conveyed on board Roman galleys hailing from Cadiz, as 'White Albanian;' and the *Tabernero* of the period may have dispensed within the walls of Rome the luscious vintages of Tarraconensis as true Falernian worthy of Bacchus.

The vintner in all ages and in all countries has had a bad reputation, and in Spain he is at times very unfavourably criticized. A certain Sebastian Horozco, who wrote Autos and mystery plays, *circa* A.D. 1500, in Seville, printed some verses which I venture to translate. The author reprimands a tavern-keeper who has been caught mixing water with his wine:

'At the marriage feast of Cana a mighty miracle was shown,
In the slender jars came wine where water had been thrown;
But thou dost daily make by mixture, water, wine.
Thou traitor, rogue, and counterfeit, t' dare copy love divine:

Thou dreamest not that I suspect, nor ambushed nightly lie,
And see thee pour the crystal stream, until the wine-skins sigh.
I know that thou wilt say the wine's so very strong,
By making one skin two, I check the toper's song.

Rogue, thus with well and river, the pricked wine thou dost fine,
And this same nauseous stew dost call the fruit of vine.
Wine! cheat, counterfeit, and rogue, 'tis weak and sour and dark,
It has the look of turbid broth, and smells like tanner's bark!'

Here is a Spanish ballad of more modern date, in which sherry appears to play a not unimportant part:

'Three tailors in Granada dwelt, and they were shameless wights,
The world saw what they did by day, the winking stars at nights.
Gil Perez was a short stout man of Sancho Panza cut,
Zapatos always down at heels, body round as an oil butt.

José Larga was another star in that same hemisphere,
He drank and sang, looked sanctified, was shriven thrice a year.
Now Larga was as tall and thin as the Manchegan Knight,
But always knew the wine-shops where the wine was good and bright.

Pepe Chico was the third and last of this same luckless band,
He sang and danced, an "Andaluz," ready of tongue and hand.

Granada knew these luckless wights, each "tabernero" knew the crew,
For Chico sang a jovial lay, and could drink a "copa" too.

Now Chico made his jackets well, and gave a jaunty fit,
And youths who studied much *la mode* liked his cut as well as wit.
Don Sanchez in Granada dwelt and traded much in oil,
Had reached a very sober age when caught in Cupid's coil.

La Morena had not seen sixteen, her eyes were liquid fire,
And when she went to daily prayer had her mother always by her.
The merchant he was well-to-do, and a most proper match,
So when he came to plead his suit, mamma says, "Lift the latch."

Mamma declares Morena must. Morena stormed and cried,
"I'd rather be a nun," she sobs, "than that old oil-man's bride."
Mamma replied, "You'll grow wiser, dear, when you mix more in the world."
"Not I, indeed!" Morena sobs, while scorn her red lips curled.

Was ever luckless maid like this, in such a woeful plight?
She stormed and pouted all the day, and cried through half the night.

Pepe Chico rarely troubled church, but sauntering in one day,
He sees Morena bathed in tears—poor Chico was but clay.

Tears so long dim a maiden's sight as she doesn't care to see,
Her fan it fell at Chico's feet; their dark eyes met. "Ah me!"
Morena sobs; "I thank you, sir." Mamma looks proud and glum;
But Chico thinks he'd like to see the house from which they come.
So Chico marks the dwelling well, and when the sun sinks west,
He puts a friend to watch the street, and carols forth his best:

"No sun hath shone this weary day,
The night is dark and drear;
With hopeless love I pine away,
No moon, no shining star is here.

"The bark with shattered, useless helm,
Is by the tempest tost,
The surging billows lash the shore,
And the frail bark is lost.

"Sweet Zaide ope the jalousie,
And glad my aching sight;
Oh let me worship those twin stars!
Oh bid them shine to-night!"

Now Chico's voice was passing sweet as he sings this
Moorish air,
While slowly opes the jalousie, and a tiny hand is there.
The hand is soft and white and plump, a very small one
too,
And Chico kissed it more than once, most likely so
would you.

"Naranjas" scent the heavy air, the acacia droops with
dew;
But what does Chico care for scents with heart drilled
through and through.
So Chico whispers, "By your side I'll be at vespers,
love,
To-morrow. When you kneel in church, drop your
left-hand glove;

I'll pick it up and hand it you; but inside you will
find
Something, which read alone. Let no one see it!
Mind."
And so the church a rendezvous is made by these two
sinners,
Passing their daily "*billets-doux*" with the ardour of
beginners.

Of course Morena couldn't tell how much she Sanchez
hated.
Chico declares that while he breathes, they never shall
be mated.
Chico declares a great deal more than can be written
down;
How he feasts upon Morena's smile, and starves upon
her frown.

It fell upon a certain day Don Sanchez went to dine,
In sprucest vest and *capa* new to punish the Alcalde's
wine.
Now Chico had a private stock, a little store of
sherry,
For use of friends at bull-fights and such occasions
merry.

The Alcalde, he had more than once this tempting tipple
tasted,
He always drained the very dregs, 'twas wrong a drop
be wasted.
A Jerezano Chico was; at Jerez they grow sherry:
His brother was a broker there, and like Chico sharp
and merry.

Each "San José" a little cask arrived at Chico's
door.
It isn't often brothers send aught worth one's private
store.
The Alcalde visits Chico's shop, and says, "Juan Sanchez
dines
With me to-day at six o'clock, you know he likes good
wines."

Had Chico been a silly elf and with jealousy turned
green,
Muttering, "He loves the girl I love, the wretch, the
caitiff mean!"
He would have done an unwise thing, put Sanchez on
his guard,
So he gulps his rising passion down—a dram to swallow
hard.

A NIGHT-SCENE IN JEREZ. *Drawn by Vierge.*

No, Chico wisely sends the wine for the Alcalde and his friend,
He knows they both are thirsty souls, and a jolly time will spend.
He wishes that the food may choke the wretch Morena hates,
"My sherry, too, to wash it down—how hard ye use me, Fates!"

* * * * *

A bright idea fills Chico's brain; he calls upon his friends.
They hear his plan and both approve, while ready aid each lends:
They post them by the Alcalde's door, and as the clock strikes ten,
Sanchez, staggering, bids his friend "Good-night," in a state I blush to pen.

Sanchez with unsteady gait essays the middle of the street,
When Chico's friends rush slyly out and trip him off his feet.
The watch comes running to the spot; but Chico says, "I'll see
Don Sanchez to his house hard-by. Pray, Don Sanchez, lean on me."

Oh, shameless Chico! but in love and war all stratagems be fair;
He knocks at La Morena's gate and assumes a tipsy air,
The welcome "*Quien es?*" meets his ear—'tis Morena's voice so sweet;
Chico supports the tipsy Don to keep him on his feet.

"Señoras, Don Sanchez would insist on knocking at your gate;"
Sanchez looks grave and stammers out, "I fear, my love, I'm late."
Morena and her dear mamma are in an awful fright,
To see a would-be son-in-law in so disreputable a plight.
Chico feigns an accent thick, but whispers to his dove,
"The horses wait at Seville gate; the cage is open, love."

* * * * *

Another moon had scarcely shone upon the ruined palace of the Moor,
When, as a wife, Morena knocks at the old familiar door.
Her mother's eyes they brim with tears, but she must a lecture give,
The text imprudence, and a prayer that happily they may live.
Chico eschews all taverns now, and lives a model spouse,
While Sanchez curses loud and deep his unfortunate carouse.

* * * * *

Poor Sanchez lived for many years a lone, a miserable man,
And though he sold no end of oil, waxed thin and pale and wan.

The Señoras say he pines away from vigils at the shrine of Cupid ;
The señors, doubtless misinformed, whisper, " 'Tis sherry makes him stupid."
La Morena, as poor Chico's wife, was a pattern for all Spain,
And slyly says sure Sanchez's loss was clearly Chico's gain.

* * * * *

One day died Sanchez, and his gold he wills in form to Chico,
Who then retired from threads and tapes, and is dubbed the "*Sastre rico.*"
The Chicos now dwell at Madrid, and fête great dukes and lords,
All threads and tapes to name forbid, they scatter Sanchez's hoards.'

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